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*Honesty and Plain-Dealing an usual
Bar to Honour and Preferment.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at St. M A R Y's

Before the

University of OXFORD,

Upon A C T-S U N D A Y

July IX. 1710.

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NUMB. 24th II.

*thought to promote thee unto great Honour ;
 at lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from Honour.*

THESE words are the passionate and angry
 Resentment of *Balak King of Moab*, against
Balaam the Sorcerer, for not cursing the
 us, and blasting the *Designs* of the *Children of Is-*

For this People coming up in a numerous Body
Egypt, to take possession of the *Promis'd Land*,
 to be invested with the rights and inheritance of
 Forefathers, made a very formidable figure in the
 of *Moab*, and struck a terror and confusion into

the Neighbouring Countries. *Balak* and his Sub-
 were strangely surpriz'd at the Greatness of their
 bers, and the Extravagancy of their *Demands*, and
 afraid, lest they should lick up all that was round
 them, as the Ox licketh up the grass of the field.

Such a potent and numerous Enemy, conducted
 a foreign Country by a constant series of Miracles,
 to be pick'd out for some great Design, and to be
 oy'd as the Instruments of Providence, to chastise
 rebellion of the other Nations. This made the
 ities apprehensive of their own Danger, and fear-
 where the Storm would discharge it self. The
 ment was very visible and apparent, and the
 of Justice hung threatening over their Heads :
 Sons and Daughters expected to be carried into
 sign Captivity, and Desolation and Famine were
 approaching their native Country.

Under such a melancholly and dismal Prospect of
 ings, King *Balak* took all politick measures of secu-
 his Person, and defending his *Dominions* : and,
 much as he found himself inferior to the Enemy,
 unable to dispute the point fairly with them in
 field ; he had recourse to indirect Practices, and
 avour'd to supply by *Stratagem* what was wanting

Numb. 12.

1, 3.

v. 4.

in *Strength*, and by the Arts of *Magick* and *Sorcery* to vanquish those, whom *Chariots* and *Armies* could make no impression upon.

Balaam, the Son of Beor, was the Person pitched on for this notable piece of Service, and the Dependence of his *Learning*, and the Reputation of his *Sanctity*, gave a fresh Life to the Expectation of the *Moabites*, buoy'd them up with the hopes of Success in the Undertaking. But he, being over-rul'd by the Spirit of *Prophecy*, and receiving Counter-orders from the true God, was unable to find any *Enchantment* against *Israel*; and so was oblig'd to alter the Measures of his Proceedings, and to turn the desired *Curse* into a *Blessing*.

This so highly provok'd the Displeasure, and raised the Indignation of the King, that he banish'd the *chanter* from his Presence, and with a seeming Affection and Pride and Contempt told him, what Honours and Favours his Plain-dealing and Sincerity had deprived him of. *I thought to promote thee unto great Honour, but lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from Honour.*

These words seem to be founded upon that common notion which some great Men have, that they who are *master in holy things*, are ty'd up to no other Rules than those of their *Interest*; that Religion is a Craft, Conscience a Jest; that Prayers are an idle Amusement, and the *Power of the Keys* entirely at the disposal of the Prince.

I shall therefore beg your Leave to let *Balaam* present that Order of Men, which the King thought him no inconsiderable Member of, and that you will not at present load his Memory with too much Infamy and Disgrace, nor sink his Character below the Reputation which the Court had of it. For tho' he was misguid'd in the Object of his Worship, and took wrong Measures in his Applications to the Deities, yet his *Office* was esteem'd sacred by the Heathens; his *Reputation* was great in his Country; his *Power* was rever'd by All, and his present *Conduct* was particularly applauded by those, who were under

some unfortunate Mistakes with himself. How justly never the Worshipers of the true God may blame the *Superstition* of the *Sorcerer*, and reflect upon the *Madness of the Prophet*; yet *Balak* being under the Possessions of a *false Religion*, and the Guidance of an *erroneous Conscience*, could not but have a great Veneration both for the *Art* and *Person* of *Balaam*.

Upon this Supposition therefore, (namely the Opinion of *Balaam's* being a *Prophet*, and the Respect which was thought due to his *Function*,) I shall treat of that rough and haughty Answer, which *Balak* gave him for not *curfing* his Enemies. *I thought to promote thee unto great Honour; but lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from Honour.*

These Words, (as appears by the Circumstances of the foregoing Story, and the Remarks I. have made upon the Context,) do represent to us that extravagant Notion of *Power*, which *Balak* as a *King*, thought himself invested with, to command the Service of *Balaam*, (whom he respected as a true *Prophet*,) to do a thing *illegal* in it self, and *inconsistent* with his *Office*, upon a Prospect of that Honour and Preferment, which he was in a Capacity to oblige him with.

This remarkable Transaction between the *King* and the *Prophet*, will furnish me with these following Observations, for the Subject of my ensuing Discourse.

FIRST, That the generality of *Superiors*, by a Stretch of their Authority, are willing to demand illegal and unwarrantable things of *Ecclesiastical Persons*.

SECONDLY, That the Method and Artifice, by which they think to prevail over mercenary Men, is the specious Offer of Preferment and Honour.

THIRDLY, That the common way to worldly Grandeur, is to study the *Temper*s, and conform to the *Principles* of those, who are in a Condition to oblige *them*.

FOURTHLY, That Plain-dealing is the usual Bar and Impediment to a Good Man's Advancement.

FIFTHLY,

A Sermon Preach'd before

FIFTHLY, That it is still the Duty of a Good Man, notwithstanding the Allurements and Temptations of this World, to act agreeably to his Conscience, and the Laws of his God.

SIXTHLY, That a Person who acts thus impartially between the Commands of his Prince, and the Dictates of his Conscience, shall find infinite Comfort and Satisfaction, altho' he misses those Advantages, which Flatterers and Temporizers may gain at the present.

FIRST, The first thing observable is, that Superiors, by a Stretch of their Authority, are willing to demand illegal and unwarrantable things of *Ecclesiastical Persons*.

Notwithstanding we have a common Rule and Standard of our Actions, and the Boundaries of Good and Evil are sufficiently fix'd and determin'd; yet Great Men, that are given up to Lust, and Slaves to Ambition, are for removing the Fences at pleasure, and *establishing Iniquity by a Law*. Their Stations make them Head-strong and Assuming, Positive and Imperious; and the not well-understanding the Limits of their Power, puts them upon a wrong Use and Application of it. Hence 'tis that they grow fond of themselves, and disrespectful to others; look upward with Envy, and downward with Disdain; are too Big to be controul'd, and too Wise to err. They think Good and Evil to be arbitrary things, and themselves Persons commission'd to enact them at pleasure. They are for a *Latitude in Principles*, and a *Licentiousness in Practice*; for Stretching the *Prerogative* to the Prejudice of Conscience, and for *Cutting the Knot* which they can't handsomely *untie*.

Now it is much to be fear'd that the Easiness and Compliance of *some*, who ought to have more Courage and Fidelity in their Sacred Function, has given too great Encouragement to the exorbitant Demands of their *Superiors*. For tho' we should grant an *Absolute Power* in the Prince, and exact an *Unconditional Obedience*

ance from the *Subject*; yet does it not follow that this Power should be transfer'd from *Civil* to matters purely *spiritual*, or that this *Obedience* should impose upon the Consciences of Men, or evacuate the Commands of God. For this would be to blend and confound two distinct and independent Jurisdictions, and shamefully to depress our God, that we might exalt his *Vice-gerent*: it would be to stretch the *Prerogative*, and confine the *Priesthood*; to strip the *Church*, and enrich the *State*; to be stingy to the *Mitre*, and too liberal to the *Crown*; to be *Passive* to a Fault, and even *Loyal* to a Sin: In short, it would be to flatter Princes with a Power, which God never entrusted them with; to complement away the *Liberty* which Christ has given to his *Church*, and to perswade our *Ecclesiastical Governors* to stand for Ciphers in their own *Courts of Judicature*. In Excess this way has without doubt blown up the Vanity of *Princes*, and some times prevail'd with the *Subject*, to be not only *Passive* in his Obedience, but *Active* in his Compliance to their unjust Commands; the former of which will never cease to be an indispensable Duty, and the latter will always continue a damnable Sin.

The Sum and Substance then of what has been said, amounts to no more than this, that a false Notion of Power in *Superiors*, back'd with a tame and servile temper in Dependents and Inferiours, and a stretch of Conscience in matters that are not dispensable with by the Laws of God, has made Princes aspiring in their Humours, and unreasonable in their Demands; perswaded them to think too highly of themselves, and too contemptibly of others, and by the sole Dint of their Authority, to put a Stamp upon Truth it self, and force any Doctrine to pass for Current and Orthodox. But, SECONDLY, The next Observation from the Text is; that the Method and Artifice, by which great Men think to prevail over mercenary Souls, is the specious Offer of Preferment and Honour.

Now the Truth of this Observation will appear from these three following Considerations.

First, The Prevalency of the Offer it self. Se-

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Secondly, The Agreeableness of it to human Nature.
Thirdly, The Condition of the Person that offers it.
First, The Offers of Honour and Preferment are very tempting and prevalent in themselves. The Height of a Station is apt to amuse the Eye, and overturn the Brain; and *the Kingdoms of this world*, and *the Glories thereof*, are ensnaring Proposals to aspiring tempers. The Favour of a *Prince*, and the Nod of a *Courtier*; the *Greetings in the Markets*, and the Pre-eminence at an Entertainment; a Distinction of Quality, and *the uppermost Seats in the Synagogues*, have had a pernicious influence upon popular Spirits, and made haughty and ambitious Persons look with Disdain and Contempt upon all below them. The Notion which *Balak* seems to have entertain'd of his Power, was to bribe the *Conscience*, and buy the *Curses* of the Prophet; and the same Principle runs thro' other Great Men, and puts a fatal Bias upon their Creatures and Dependents. Courtesie in Superiors has effected strange things in some Complaisant Gentlemen, and Bribes have been more potent and successful than Armies. A seasonable Gift has oftentimes stop'd the Mouth of a terrible Adversary, and a *Goodly* Preferment brought down the Stanchness of an Orthodox *Divine*. Honour is apt to dazle our Eyes, and misguide our Steps, to clear up our Understandings, and melt down our Consciencess; to infuse Light into the Heart, and Vigour into the Hand: to pervert the Will, and bias our Actions; to rectify the Notions of Good and Evil, and refine upon the old fashion'd Doctrines of our Ancestors: In one word, it is apt to blun our Satyr, and disarm our Fury; to overbear our Arguments, and silence our Tongues; to open another Scheme of Christian Duties, and give a *new*, but *surprizing* Turn to the Brain of a *Casuis*t. How strangely have some Men been enlighten'd! how wonderfully have they grown *Wiser*! how suddenly have they discarded their old Principles! how shamefully shook hands with their dearest Friends! And what is more of all surprizing, their Conversion has been in an in-

at, and their former Scruples have vanish'd in a moment, and what was design'd to harden them in their errors, has been the happy Instrument of their Conversion.

But notwithstanding all these specious Pretences and Signs, these Flourishes and Salvoes of a temporizing Conscience; the World will be so ill-natur'd, as to call their *Zeal*, and question their *Reformation*; to thro' the Masks and Disguises of Designing Men, discover the secret hand behind the Curtain, which so plausibly turns round the Machines, so artificially changes the Scenes. But,

Secondly, This Offer of Preferment was more likely to succeed, because it was agreeable to the ambitious Fires of humane Nature. And here no body can say, but that *Balak's* Politicks were regular, and the Scheme well laid; the Bait was plausible and inviting, the Prophet attack'd on the right side. And tho' the event did not answer Expectation, it was more owing to the Interposition of Providence, and the Power of a Superior Power, than to the Courage and Inclination of *Balaam*. For if corrupted Nature had been left to her own Choice and Conduct, what more could have kept his ground? What Man could have been so brave and hardy, as to cope with the united Force of Honour and Interest? The Conquest in this case was like to prove easy and delightful, and the Charms of Gold to be an Over-match for the Powers of Magick.

There is a great Degree of Pride and Ambition, which is planted at the very Root of our Nature, and discovers it self in the most considerable Actions of our Life. The Love of our Selves is generally at the Bottom of our Projects, and the Prospect of Honour gives Life and Spirit to the most hazardous Undertakings: It cancels all former Friendships, and supercedes Obligations: it despises Danger, and bears down Opposition; breaks thro' the Ties of Nature, and over-turns the Principles of Religion and Conscience. But,

B

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Honour and Preferment may seem more tempting and valuable upon the account of the Person that confers them. The Ear of a Prince is an uncommon Favour, and an Audience at Court is not easily obtain'd. There are a great many Difficulties that obstruct the Passage, and 'tis usual to pass through an abundance of tedious Formalities and lingring Application to make our *Addresses*, or present a *Petition*. Majesty is not to be approach'd at all times, nor State and Grandeur laid aside to please the Humour of every Subject. Favourites perhaps may be heard, and favouring Parasites caress'd and rewarded, but Men of Uprightness and Integrity are to be kept at a Distance, and Persons that bear no Character must not expect to appear before Kings.

Since therefore, the Access to Superiors is so difficult, and their Favours are so rare and uncommon; it is no wonder that the Worth of them is magnified, and the Value augmented to an extravagant rate. For it is not always so much the Greatness of the Gift as the Quality of the Person that gives it, which makes it acceptable to the Receiver. A Royal Favour is the more to be esteem'd, because it is sought for with Toil, and obtain'd with Difficulty. Were the Purchase cheap, the Benefit might be neglected, and the Commonness of the Blessing take off from the real Value of it; but since it passes thro' so many Hands, it is conferr'd from such an high Station, it raises in proportion to the Greatness of him that gives it, and is more pleasing to the Ambition, and agreeable to the Temper of him that receives it. But,

THIRDLY, The common Way to worldly Grandeur is to study the Tempers, and conform to the Principles of those who are in a Condition to oblige you. If *Balaam* will have Honour and Promotion, he must act as *Balak* will have him, and curse the *Israelites* or lose the *Blessing* of the King. His Conscience must be easy and complaisant, pliant and conformable, and all the Powers in Heaven must be engag'd on his side, whenever the Humour of his Prince requires.

Th

us Religion, (tho' in it self pure and spiritual, and
e its Divine Author, *liable to no Variableness* or
Shadow of Turning,) is oftentimes born off from its na-
e Simplicity, and wrested and warp'd to secular
rposes. It must be blended with Art, and disguis'd
Knavery; be allay'd with Superstition, and coun-
teited by Hypocrisy: It must be moulded and tem-
p'd to make it current and fashionable, and turn'd
o ten thousand Shapes to render it agreeable to dif-
ent Palates, and Variety of Ages: It must be gloss'd
on and interpreted at pleasure; be taught the Lan-
age of Courts, and be made subservient to the In-
rest of Princes: the Rigours of it must be soften'd,
d the Penalties extenuated; the pretended Excre-
nces par'd off, and substantial Duties dissembled;
e very Life of it stifled, and only the shadow pre-
rv'd. It must sooth the *Enthusiast*, and caress the *De-
uchee*; pervert the *Learner*, and excuse the *Ignorant*;
mfort the *Drunkard*, and indulge the *Libertine*: It
ult be *Grimace* to the *Humorist*, and *Cruelty* to the
alot; *Starchness* to the *Hypocrite*, and *Craft* to the
llain; *All things to all men*, and every thing in
t, but what it really is.

Thus is Religion taught to differ and vary, as
uch as the very Faces of its Professors; and the
heme of Principles can no more suit with every Age
d Humour, than the same Garment fit every indi-
dual Person in the World. It is no wonder then,
at designing Men are so apt to *veer* and *tack* about,
d to prostitute their Conscience upon every new
rn of Government, if we consider the Principles of
e Court they are dependent upon, and the Humours
those great Persons they have Expectation from.
ho' *Naaman* may proclaim the Greatness of his *Cure*,
d magnify the Power of that God who effected it,
et he can't tell how to be a Worshiper of him, unless
e have a Dispensation for *Bowing in the House of* ^{2 Kings 9:}
Shimon: For his Character at Court must be kept up, ^{18.}
d his Post in the Government secur'd; his Devo-
ons are to be cramp't by a *Place*, and his Gratitude

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flified by a stinging Reserve for his *Master*: And in *nothing* it is to be hop'd, *that the Lord will pardon his Servant*, and not urge his Duty to the Prejudice of his Interest; it is to be hop'd the God of *Israel* will make some allowances for *Reasons of State*, and the *Good of the Publick*, and not too rigidly insist upon the Conversion of a *Courtier*, or the Piety of a *Soldier*.

Neither was this *Naaman's* particular case only, but every Age has produc'd Instances of some Men, who would willingly serve their own Turns by their Pretensions to *Godliness*, and every Reign has furnish'd out some Doctrines, which the Slaves to a Court, and the Seekers after Preferment, have greedily suck'd in, and zealously propagated. How often has *Law* and *Divinity* been canvass'd, the *Statutes* and the *Bible* been ransack'd, to give proof and credit to a *Doubtful Title*? How often have the Heads of Divines, and the Pens of Criticks been employ'd, to strike out some new and *marvellous light*, from the intricate and mysterious *Visions* of *Ezekiel*, and to sooth the Ambition, and justify the Undertakings of Princes, by an odd and ridiculous Comment upon the *Revelations*.

At other times all the Distinctions of the *School* must be sifted, to pick out *Reserves*, and *Salvoes* for a temporizing Conscience; and the Pretensions of *Rulers* must be pronounc'd Just and Honourable, both by the Laws of God and Man, whenever their Honour, or Ambition leads them to enlarge their Dominions, and encroach upon the Rights of their innocent Neighbours.

Thus when *Abah* and *Jehosaphat* reviv'd an old Claim to *Ramoth-Gilead*, and combin'd to enter upon it by force of Arms, *all the false Prophets* declar'd that

¹ *King* 22. *they should go up against it; and prosper; for God would*

¹² *certainly deliver that important Place into their hands*

This was a Comfortable Determination of a weighty Case, and these were Casuists fit to be consulted by ambitious Princes; And accordingly their Words were immediately receiv'd as the Oracles of God, and their Persons had in the highest Esteem and Veneration.

When

When *Korab* and his Company pleaded for the *Holi-*
ty of the Congregation, and encourag'd a Mutiny a-^{Numb. 16.}
 gainst *Moses* and *Aaron*, they were presently caress'd as
 Patriots of the *People*, and represented as Men service-
 able in their Generation, and of the greatest Character
 and Renown in their Country. Rebellion (it seems)
 sanctify'd their Persons, and their Pretensions
 of Necessity be lawful, because they struck in
 with a Faction, and were countenanc'd by the *Populace*.
 From hence we may gather, that it is not always
 Right but *Humour*, not *Religion* but *Interest*, that
 raises a Man at the Head of a Party, and gives him a
 Character in this World. He that suits his Discourse
 to the Times, and *propheesies smooth things*; that
 mixes with *untemper'd Mortar*, and calls *Good Evil*, and
Evil Good, shall certainly have the Applauses of a cor-
 rupt and vicious Age; but he that has regard only to
 the Rules of Truth, and does not nicely distinguish
 the Persons of Men, shall meet with abundance of
 Coldness and Indifferency. For it is observable that
 every Age has its peculiar and darling Doctrines, and
 can't endure the touching of some tender Points,
 which are contrary to the approv'd Maxims of Govern-
 ment and Policy.

Ask thy Fathers, and they will shew thee; enquire of Deut. 32.7
Elders, and they will tell thee, to what an insup-
 portable Height the Jurisdiction of *St Peter* was ad-
 vanc'd, and how Crowns and Scepters were laid at the
 feet of his haughty Successors; and then presently,
 upon a little Disgust, the *Supremacy* was transfer'd to
 the *King*, and all the Passages to Preferment stop'd,
 unless you ador'd his *Majesty*, and vilify'd his *Holiness*.
 In succeeding Ages the Prerogative was screw'd up to
 the highest Degree, and a *Jus Divinum* pleaded in be-
 half of Monarchy and absolute Government; and af-
 ter that, *Liberty* and *Property* cast the Balance to the
Republican side, and the *natural Right of Free-born Sub-*
jects was a specious colour for *Faction* and *Rebellion*.
Passive Obedience and *Non-resistance* have had their se-
 veral Rises and Turns in the World; and then the Mur-
 der-

dering of *Kings*, and the *Binding of Nobles in links of Iron*; the Pillaging of Estates, and the Banishment of the legal Owners have been the Doctrines of our *Saviour*, and the Privileges of his *Saints*. The Story of the *Maccabees*, like a two-edged Sword, has cut every way, and been pleaded for and against *Resistance*; and the *Theban Legion* has been either *Truth* or *Fiction*, as it has best suited with the Humour of *Princes*, and the Interest of *Writers*.

Lastly, Every One knows the Time, when *Doves* have learnedly press'd the Necessity of *Church Communion*, and set off the Danger of *Schism* and *Dissension* with a becoming Warmth and Zeal; and the *Tables* have been turn'd on a sudden, and the same Men have been all over *Peace* and *Love*, *Gentleness* and *Forbearance*: *Moderation* has been in their Mouths, and *Lukewarmness* in their Hearts; *Latitude* in their Principles, and *Indifference* in their Practice.

All these Instances make it undeniably appear, what Variety of Doctrines have been in Vogue in this Nation, and what Shifting and Turning there has been in the several Parts of Religion. It is not my Business to determine, which Point, upon a just State of the Question, may be right; but only to remark to you, that all these Doctrines have had their Rise and Fall according to the Humours and Inclinations of Men. Authority, and the way to worldly Advancement have been to swim with the Stream, and strike in with the fashionable Principles of the Times: so that the *Court*, not the *Bible*, has given Instructions to the *Prophet*, and the *Will of the Prince*, not the *Law of God*, has been the *Rule of the Subject's Obedience*. But,

FOURTHLY, As Flattery and Trimming have been the first steps to Preferment; so Plain-dealing and Sincerity have been the usual Bar and Impediment against it. The chief reason why Merit is seldom dignify'd and distinguish'd, and Men of Goodness and Piety are so often neglected, is, because a licentious Age can't bear the Soundness of their Doctrines, and the Freedom of their Reproofs.

1 Kin, 2 R.
20.

The like misfortunes happen'd to *Micaiah*, when he declar'd against the Expedition into *Ramoth-gilead*, and represented all *Israel* scatter'd upon the Hills, as if wanting a Shepherd. For his Prophecy was rewarded, and his Person ignominiously treated for telling Truth: *Abab* positively declar'd he hated him, because he did not prophecy Good concerning him, but Evil, and as a Reward for his Sauciness, commanded him to be kept in Prison, and fed with Bread of Affliction, and Water of Affliction, till he return'd in Peace. Fetters and stripes, perhaps, might bring the Man of God to a better mind, and oblige him to preach a more courtly and seasonable Doctrine. For Truth is of too plain and homely an aspect to be seen at all times, and those that would dwell in Kings Houses, must be distinguish'd by the Smoothness of their Speech, as well as the Softness of their Raiment. Some Persons are too big for proof, and too wise for Instruction; and when once they have got the Sway and Ascendant of such kind, it grows head-strong and assuming, rebellious and

and untractable, and discharges its Fury upon those who oppose the Torrent, and are for stopping the growth of Infidelity. If the *Preachers of Righteousness* will be faithful Monitors, and speak Truth boldly, there will never be wanting *Ababs* to hate the *Persons*, and *Balaks* to dishonour their Function. Their *Plain-dealing* will disgust their Rulers, and their Principles put a stop to their Perseverment; and *lo, the Lord hath kept them back from Honour.*

FIFTHLY, Notwithstanding the allurements and temptations of this World, it is still the duty of a good Man to act agreeably to his Conscience, and the Laws of God. And here *Balaam* is so far a pattern for our Actions, as he did not embrace the unreasonable proposals, and comply with the unjust demands of *Balak*. He boldly own'd himself a *Servant* to another *Master*, and so much at the disposal of a Superior power, that if the King would give him his Honour *full of silver and gold, he could not go beyond the word the Lord his God, to do less or more.* The Answer was generous, and the Resolution brave; the Principle was rightly form'd, and the *Example* may be instructive to Posterity. For every one that acts by a Commission from God, as *Balaam* pretended to do, and is call'd in to give his advice in things pertaining to his Function, must either dishonour his great Master, and forfeit his own Character, or be particularly remarkable for these following Virtues:

Numb. 22.
18.

First, Such an Uprightness and Sincerity of Mind as will secure him from any mean compliance with the Demands, or any fustian flattery to the Persons of those, *who have the rule over him.*

Secondly, For such Care and Industry in all the concerns of that great Master, *whose he is, and whom he serves*, as may prove him to be a true *Ambassador of Christ*, and a faithful *Steward of the Mysteries of God.*

Thirdly, For such Courage and Resolution in enforcing the Precepts of Christianity, and exacting Obedience from all orders and degrees of Men.

as shew him to have no other aim in view, than the Honour of his God, and the Salvation of his Brethren.

He that is indued with these Qualifications, and fully discharges his Office in all these respects, the very *Reverse* of that fawning and temporizing sycophant, whom I have so fully describ'd in the foregoing discourse: and I have no farther occasion to engage upon this Subject, or to make any other use of the three last Observations, than to sum up the Character of a good Man in a word or two.

We may see then that he is a Man of *Conscience*, and free from *Interest*; free from *Design*, and unaccustom'd to flattery; steady in his *Principles*, and regular in his *Practice*; devout in his *Life*, and uniform in his *Actions*. Tho' he is a Stickler for Government, and an example of Obedience, he is no Friend to the Cabals, Patron of the Injustice of his Governors. He neither robs his God to enrich his *Sovereign*, or depresses his *Sovereign* to exalt his *Subjects*. He has no notion of the *State* in prejudice to the *Church*, nor owes any *Secret Service* to his *Prince*, contrary to his *publick* Engagements and Obligations to his *God*. The Rule of his life is steady and unerring, and his *Conscience void of offence towards God and towards Man*. His *Pen* is not mercenary, nor his *Lips* perfidious; his *Head* wavering, nor his *Heart* deceitful. He never wrests Scripture from its genuine Sense, nor perverts the text to his private *Interest*; He makes no false Comments upon *St. Paul* for the sake of a Party, nor conceals any necessary truth in complement to his *Superiors*. He has Courage to *defend* what was his duty to *assert*, and Zeal to *practice* what was his Principle to *preach*. He is not to be carry'd away with *Flattery*, or amus'd with *Greatness*; not to be won by *Smiles*, or terrify'd by a *Frown*; not to be mov'd by *fair words*, or bought off by real *Preferments*.

Since then the Character of this good Man is so forming and delightful, and the Virtues which compose it so rare and uncommon; since the Temptations

to Vice are so prevalent, and the Proposals of Honour and Preferment so engaging; since Men of our Profession are generally attack'd from this quarter, and the Tricks of State are carry'd on by the Servile Compliances of Church-men; it will not be improper, at the close of this Discourse, to fortify our minds against those Baits and Snares that are generally laid in our way, and to encourage one another in *well-doing* from a prospect of that *Recompence of reward*, which a conscientious discharge of our Duty will intitle us to. For by this means we shall convince our Superiors that we look higher than the petty and trifling considerations of this world, and are not so mercenary in our Tempers, and loose in our Principles, as they may fancy us to be. We shall declare to all mankind that we don't study to be *great* at the expence of a good Conscience, or use any indirect means to gain higher and more honourable Stations than our Neighbours; but that we endeavour to promote the common Interest of the Church and State, and to vindicate the Honour of the Priesthood, and instead of being broken into Parties, and led away by crafty Men, are willing to unite as *Brethren*, are zealous to act as *Christians*.

Now for our greater Encouragement in this work we may in the

SIXTH and last place consider that Comfort and Satisfaction, which a Person that acts impartially between the Commands of his God, and the Dictates of his Conscience, does in part find *already*, and shall more fully experience *hereafter*, tho' he misses those advantages, which Flatterers and Temporizers may gain in this World. For if the Performance of good Actions fills Men with Joy and Delight, certainly he shall have a more than ordinary share of it, who has stood the Tryal in the most dangerous times, and opposed himself against the most violent Temptations. For to withstand the Overtures of Interest and Honour, and vanquish the perverse Inclinations of Intriguing Men, argues no inferior Degree of Virtue, and intitles a Man to no mean reward. As the *Enterprise* was great

at, and the *Danger* uncommon, so the *Wages* shall proportionable, and the *End* Glorious.

If we look no farther than this World, I take the Reflections of a Man's mind upon a well spent Life, the Assurances of a good Conscience in general, to be a great Encouragement to his Actions, and no small Comfort under his Sufferings: And in the Case before us, when any Person has been employ'd in public Concerns, and not been born off from his Duty by private Interest, the Reflection upon his past Services must be more pleasing to himself, and the Appearances of his Conscience rapturous and transporting. If perilous times should arise, and God in his anger should give up a rebellious and disobedient Nation, that inward Peace and Satisfaction must those few good Men have, who, like *Moses*, *have stood in the gap*, and endeavour'd to stop the torrent of Infidelity; who by all suitable Arguments have oppos'd the most common and fashionable Sins of the Age, and not basely flatter'd and truckled to Men in Authority. Their present Comfort and Rejoicing is, that in an *honest* simplicity, and *godly Sincerity*, they have had their Consolation in this World, and not been carry'd away by Prejudice and Partiality, or influenc'd by the ill Examples of great Men; That they have advanc'd no Principles destructive to the Constitution, nor encourag'd any Practices offensive to God; That they have neither unhing'd the Government, or betrayed the Church; neither flatter'd their Superiors, or misled their Brethren.

Whatsoever, therefore, shall be the Fate of their native Country, and whatever Afflictions shall light upon the Church, they have made a timely Provision for themselves, and secur'd a *Treasure* in another Kingdom. As they have been famous for a bold and unfeign'd Profession of their Faith, and appear'd openly in defence of Christ and his Gospel *before the Kings and Rulers* of this World, so they shall be own'd by their great God and Saviour, and applauded by Saints and Angels in another. The great Master whom they serve

serve is both able and willing to *promote* them, and the reward of their Service will infinitely compensate the Diligence and Fidelity: It is not subject to casualties or encumber'd with disadvantages; not to be sought for with Flattery, or procur'd by Bribery; but it is the effect of our Courage and Zeal, and the Purchase of a pure and undefil'd Conscience.

Wherefore, *my Beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast and unmoveable* in your holy Profession. Slight the deceitful Overtures of this world, and embrace the more advantageous Proposals of another: Serve a Master, who is truly honourable, and pursue your real Interest by just and reputable means. Place your *Reversion* in Heaven against the troublesome and vexatious *Possessions* on Earth, and the certain favour of your God against the fickle Humours of Earthly Potentates. Offer up a bright and triumphant Crown of Glory to the fading and momentary Honours of this World: And then you will come to a just Notion of what is truly great and magnificent, and know where to make your addresses for Substantial Preferments. You will abhor the mean compliances, and pity the mercenary tempters of some of your Brethren. You will contemn the Frowns of haughty men, and if *Kings should arise that know not Joseph*, you will overlook the Neglect of such an ungrateful Court. You will carry your Eye beyond the dazzling Greatness of temporal Honours, and your Courage will be augmented, as your Hopes enliven'd by a glorious prospect of Futurity. *Amen.*



FINIS.

